

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA

ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 105

Introduced By: Louden, 49; Adams, 24; Carlson, 38; Christensen,
44; Dierks, 40; Fischer, 43; Harms, 48; Hudkins,
21; Kopplin, 3; McDonald, 41; Preister, 5

Read first time: January 5, 2007

Committee: Appropriations

A BILL

1 FOR AN ACT relating to appropriations; to state intent; to
2 appropriate funds to the Board of Regents of the University
3 of Nebraska for the Nebraska Forest Service.
4 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. (1) The wildfires in 2006 near Valentine and in
2 the Pine Ridge were the most destructive and expensive the state has
3 ever experienced. Direct suppression costs for the 2006 fires
4 exceeded \$6,000,000 and losses due to destruction and damage to
5 residences, infrastructure, and timber were several million dollars.
6 After seven years of drought, and because of dangerously high fuel
7 loads, there is a high risk of highly destructive future wildfires.
8 The Niobrara Valley and Pine Ridge areas contain overly dense stands
9 of highly flammable coniferous trees and long-term accumulation of
10 woody fuel loads two to four times the natural levels. Since the
11 weather cannot be controlled, thinning forests to reduce forest fuel
12 loads is the only option available. The Nebraska Forest Service is
13 the state-level organization with the expertise in forest fuels
14 management and the legislative mandate to serve private forest
15 landowners. United States Forest Service funds are available to the
16 state on a matching basis, and new state funds would qualify the
17 Nebraska Forest Service for increased federal funds for forest fuels
18 management. Federal and state funds will then be used to permanently
19 and substantially reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the
20 Niobrara Valley and Pine Ridge areas through cost sharing with
21 private landowners.

22 (2) There is hereby appropriated (a) \$425,000 from the
23 General Fund for FY2007-08 and (b) \$425,000 from the General Fund for
24 FY2008-09 to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, for
25 Program 781, for the Nebraska Forest Service for forest fuels
26 management. It is intended that funds appropriated be used in
27 conjunction with federal and private resources to reduce forest fuel

1 loads.